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ABSTRACT

Some tips can assist teachers in guiding each pupil to achieve more optimally, with respect to the ability to read well and reading comprehension. Among these 10 specific tips are: (1) teach individualized phonics in context; (2) assist the student to read in proper thought units by covering up words in sentences for clarification; (3) assist students in learning to use contextual clues to identify and pronounce unknown words; (4) use how and why questions about what has been read; and (5) find out what hobbies, talents, and interests each pupil possesses and recognize them by bringing them into the reading curriculum. In addition, pupils should make their own choices from classroom or other libraries. Word attack skills, including phonics and syllabication, context clues and content meaning, and pictorial and configuration clues, should be taught by the reading teacher. Students need to read to achieve higher cognitive objectives, such as, to think critically and creatively, to identify and solve problems, and to secure facts, concepts and main ideas. Teachers, administrators, and school counselors must view pupils holistically and make provision for optimal development of each learner. (CR)

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# TIPS IN READING INSTRUCTION

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There are definite tips I would like to recommend in the teaching of reading which might well assist pupils to achieve more optimally. I have gleaned these tips from supervising student teachers and regular teachers in the public schools over a thirty year period of time. The purpose of writing this manuscript is to provide reading teachers with information which, hopefully, will assist pupils to achieve more optimally.

Tip Number One. Too frequently phonics is taught to the class as a whole on the primary grade levels. Thus, each pupil in the class receives the same/similar amount of instruction in phonics. Within a class there are pupils who are quite proficient in using phonics to read well. At the same time there are pupils who could benefit much from phonics teaching to unlock unknown words. I recommend that phonics instruction be individualized whereby a learner secures help in unlocking new words as needed. A pupil then may need very little or perhaps no assistance in phonics instruction. Whereas, others need a considerable amount of help in associating symbols with sounds to identify unknown words.

If phonics is taught prior to its use, pupils tend to forget these abstract learnings before application is needed to identify the unknown word. It appears that the time to teach phonics is when it is needed by a pupil in a contextual situation, not in isolation from the act of reading a given selection. There should be as little interruption in the process of reading subject matter when assisting a learner in phonics. Reading involves sequence, phrasing, meaning, and comprehension. Learning phonics for the sake of doing so has little or no value. However, phonics is valuable when it guides pupils to become independent readers who understand content read.

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Tip Number Two. There are pupils who need help to read in thought units. Thus proper phrasing is needed in the act of reading to further comprehension. I have noticed pupils who read a sentence



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incorrectly in the following manner: The boy with / the red/ bicycle rode away rapidly. It almost sounds as if "the bicycle rode away rapidly." These pupils can identify each word basically, in reading, but fail to read content in a meaningful manner due to poor phrasing.

I recommend here that the teacher or a capable reader/aid cover up words so that the content has to be read in proper thought units such as "The boy with the red bicycle/ rode away rapidly." Thus "rode away quickly " would need covering until "The boy with the red bicycle" has been read in a meaningful thought unit. It is best if the teacher has the time to provide this assistance. The goal for pupils to achieve when reading in proper thought units is to read fluently and comprehend what has been read.

Tip Number Three. Too frequently teachers want to pronounce unknown words to pupils before the learner has a chance to analyze that word. It is only good to have pupils become independent in recognizing words. The sooner pupils can become self sufficient in word identification the better. Life itself emphasizes that each person depend upon the self as much as possible.

Reading teachers then need to have pupils determine the pronunciation and identification of unknown words. A reasonable amount of time needs to be given here, perhaps five seconds before pronouncing an unknown word to a pupil. Even then it is best to provide ways of unlocking unknown words to the pupil, such as having the learner notice the beginning or ending letter. These letters then need to be associated with related sounds in a grapheme/ phoneme relationship.

Tip Number Four. I find that teachers should assist pupils to use contextual clues more so than is commonly done. This is a good method of pupils determining not only an unknown word but also the meaning of a word. A word that a pupil places into a sentence that appears to be unknown must make sense in relationship to the other words in the sentence being read. If pupils then use context approaches in ascertaining an unknown word as well as its meaning, the chances are that success in reading might well be in evidence much more so as compared to not using context clues. Meaningful reading is in evidence

if context clues are used by learners when reading. Why? The word supplied by a learner for an unknown word must make sense when context clues are being emphasized.

Tip Number Five. Teachers need to help pupils think about what has been read. In this way, pupils are using knowledge in new situations. The why and how questions are good to stress when emphasizing higher levels of pupil cognition. The following are examples of why questions:

1. Why do you think that way? This question pertains to a comment made by a learner in order to seek a rationale for a statement.
2. Why do you feel Mr. Wheeler had worked hard at his job?
3. Why do you believe things seemed to turn out bad for Willie?

How kinds of questions stress the following:

1. How did yesterday's story end differently as compared to today"s story?
2. How do the two main characters differ and how are they alike in comparing today's with yesterday's story?

Pupils should be guided to think critically, creatively, and engage in problem solving in the reading curriculum. These levels of cognition take time to develop within pupils; in fact, they are ongoing in development throughout an individual's life time.

Tip Number Six. Teachers need to work at securing pupil's attention at the beginning as well as throughout the reading lesson. I find that teachers too frequently do not have a strategy to interest and motivate pupils in reading. Reading instruction then becomes routine and boring to pupils. I would suggest the following:

1. initiate a lesson using a new approach such as showing a related videotape, a set of illustrations, selected objects, puppets and marionettes, and drawings, among others. Relate these materials of instruction to the content in the story. Change off by using the activities as developmental or culminating experiences for pupils that relate story content.



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2. use voice inflection properly and a stimulating voice to obtain and maintain learner attention throughout the reading lesson. Teacher enthusiasm does tend to reflect within pupils. The focal point in teaching pupils is to guide optimal achievement in reading.

3. introduce for pupils to see, trade books that relate to the story being read and discussed. I frequently reflect upon what motivated me in reading in the elementary school years. The answer is I really enjoyed reading the trade books in our rural school library. Teachers here frequently brought in additional books for pupils to read from the public library. Encourage pupils to tell during reading class what they read from other sources and materials at home or during free reading time in school.

4. vary approaches used in teaching reading with the use of pantomime, creative dramatics, and formal dramatics to breathe life into content studied in reading. Pupils reveal what has been learned by dramatizing content read. There are many ways to vary teaching methods and strategies in the teaching of reading.

5. encourage pupil achievement in reading, do not discourage. Always, reward what is positive about a pupil's achievement in reading.

Tip Number Seven. Answer parent's questions about the reading program by responding in a positive manner. There may be questions pertaining to the following:

1. how much of the basics is being stressed in reading.
2. if enough phonics is being taught.
3. why the parents child is not doing better in reading.
4. what can be done in the home setting to help the pupil do better in reading.
5. might more difficult reading materials help a child achieve more rapidly in reading.

Each teacher needs to discuss openly and freely questions raised by parents about how their child is taught in reading. Together the teacher and parents can work cooperatively in developing the best



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reading program possible for a child. I believe parents can help pupils much in the home setting so that improved reading on the pupil's part is in evidence.

Tip Number Eight. Praise each pupil for achieving in reading. the sincere praise should be given to all in a classroom. Thus regardless of ability and achievement levels, each pupil may be rewarded in moving from where he/she is presently in reading achievement to a higher level of accomplishment. The gains for selected learners in reading accomplishment may be small for a specific period of time; however, even with small gains in achievement a pupil needs to be recognized for achievement in treading. Hopefully, this will spur pupils on to greater progress in reading. The reading teacher needs to provide for individual differences so that each pupil may achieve as much as possible.

Basically, I am opposed to offering physical prizes to pupils as rewards for doing well in reading. Instead, I have found that pupils do better in reading achievement if sincere verbal praise is used.

Tip Number Nine. Meeting esteem and belonging needs of pupils is important. The reading teacher needs to find out what hobbies, talents, and interests pupils individually possess. These strengths need recognizing and brought in to the reading curriculum. The teacher needs to make use of unique abilities of pupils by integrating these in to ongoing lessons and units of study in reading. Each pupil desires to be recognized for hobbies, talents, and interests possessed. A good self concept is important for pupils to have. Reading achievement should then increase on the part of each learner if wholesome self concepts are in evidence. I have found that teachers who recognize pupil's diverse abilities assist learners to be more highly motivated in the school curriculum. Pupils also need to feel they belong and are wanted in a group setting. Educational literature stresses much that pupils work in cooperative learning endeavors. The reading teacher must study learners and place pupils into groups that are accepting. Learners need feel they belong. Feelings of belonging are important for pupils. A classroom and school setting houses pupils and no one desires to be an

isolate and shunned by others. Cooperative learning can assist pupils to achieve more optimally if members are chosen carefully for each group.

Tip Number Ten. The school needs to meet as many physiological needs of pupils as possible. Nutritious breakfasts should be served to all pupils desiring to participate. Hopefully, quality hot lunches with proper nutrition are served in all schools. A hungry pupil cannot do well in reading.

Pupils who are tired may achieve very poorly in learning to read. In parent/ teacher conferences, emphasis should be placed upon pupils having sleep and rest needs met. A conscientious parent will want to have personal needs of offspring met so that more optimal achievement in reading is possible.

The above named ten tips in teaching reading are important in assisting pupils to achieve as well as possible. I would suggest using different creative approaches by reading teachers to guide pupils to remedy deficiencies. I have suggested a few approaches, but there are others. I would also suggest that for young children, in particular, schools implement tenets of Reading Recovery programs is instruction. Here, for thirty minutes a day, a first grade pupil receives thirty minutes of one on one instruction, uninterrupted in reading. There is little time then for things that interfere with a pupil receiving continuous teaching with a single teacher in reading. Tenets of Reading Recovery should be used with older pupils; time limits could be flexible here. A second approach that I recommend is to have tape recordings that go along directly with a library book or textbook in reading. The learner then may follow along with the taped voice as he/ she views words contained in abstract print. This procedure helps pupils much in word recognition and reading more challenging materials than would otherwise be the case. The cassette recording then identifies words for pupils in reading.

A third procedure I recommend to help pupils in reading is to have pupils select and read sequentially their very own books from the classroom or centralized library. Perhaps, books can be borrowed too from the public library for pupils to read. After reading a library book,


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the pupil may have a conference with the teacher to evaluate comprehension of content as well as word recognition approaches when the learner reads orally to the teacher in the conference. The teacher can then briefly record that which the pupil needs more assistance in as far as reading achievement is concerned. A fourth procedure in teaching reading is to use personalized procedures. Thus with an experience, inside or outside the classroom, the teacher may lead pupils to provide content for a chart. Directly related to the experience, learners present the ideas and the teacher records the content on the chalkboard or computer. After the chart has been completed, the teacher guides learners to read the content by pointing to words and phrases, on the chalkboard or on the monitor. Experiences of the learner provide the content for the chart; readiness has then been provided for the act of reading. Each chart can be filed for future reading by pupils.

## The Psychology of Teaching Reading

I believe strongly that there are definite principles from the psychology of learning that should be used in reading instruction. These principles of learning from educational psychology are the following:

1. make teaching and learning procedures as interesting as possible for learners. With pupil interest, increased proficiency in reading should be an end result.

2. establish purpose for pupils to participate in ongoing lessons and units of study. Reasons are then in evidence to learners as to why it is important to learn and achieve.

3. provide for individual differences among pupils in reading instruction. Pupils differ from each other in many ways including achievement in reading. Should the teacher not respect these differences by having pupils read materials at and of different levels of complexity? Each pupil needs to be respected and assisted to achieve as well as possible in reading.

4. give continuous opportunities for pupils to experience success in learning. This is positive to do so. Successful learners in reading achieve more optimally than those facing failure excessively.

2. context clues and meaning of content read.
3. pictorial clues and configuration clues.

Reading for meaning and comprehension are major goals in reading. Thus pupils need to read to achieve higher cognitive objectives such as reading to

1.. think critically and creatively.
2. solve identify and problems.
3. secure facts, concepts, and main ideas.
4. apply what has been read.
5. detect bias and overgeneralizing.

Pupils need acceptance of each teacher so that feelings of belonging are in evidence. Learners need recognition for talents possessed in order that esteem needs may be met. All schools should assist pupils to have physiological needs met through nutritious food at breakfast time and during the noon meal. Cooperation with agencies in the community might well provide needy pupils with eye glasses and hearing aids, as well as other needs that a low income level home cannot meet.

The whole child needs to be observed to determine needs that a pupil has. Each need should be remedied as soon as possible. Teachers, administrators, and school counselors should view pupils holistically and make provision for optimal development of each learner. The pupils needs to achieve optimally presently in reading and other curriculum areas so that he/she will have an excellent chance of being ready for the work place as an adult and achieve as well as possible. Being able to read well is important in the world of work. It is also importance as a leisure time activity. Each reading teacher needs to take his/her professional responsibility with utmost sincerity. Hopefully, an end result will be a nation of readers who do well in endeavors involving reading.


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5. assist pupils to attach meaning to what is being learned. If pupils understand that which is being learned, they will retain content and skills longer. Achievement in reading is sequential and needs careful planning by the reading teacher. Pupils also need to be involved in determining sequence such as Individualized reading whereby the learner chooses sequentially library books to read.

6. show enthusiasm for teaching. Teacher enthusiasm for teaching reading does reflect within pupils when the latter is learning to read at increasing levels of complexity.

7. share with pupils what you are reading. Bring the content down to the understanding level of pupils. I believe that even Plato's Republic can be told to pupils in a manner whereby pupils attach meaning to the content.

8. use sustained silent reading to show that you the teacher also like to read. The entire class together with the teacher are reading during the time devoted to sustained silent reading. The reading teacher is a model then for pupils in the classroom.

9. read orally to pupils during story time so that pupils can enjoy quality literature in a relaxed manner. Look at pupils as the reading is being done. For young children, it is good to show the related illustrations in the library book as you read orally to them.

10. indicate your interest in the welfare of each pupil. This is more necessary than ever before when many children come from single parent homes and/or divorce appears to be minimizing the stability of family life. Be aware of possible child abuse of individual pupils. Pupils are young and vulnerable due to their age and lack of experience. The teacher can definitely be a stabilizing force here.

## In Closing

The reading teacher needs to guide each pupil to achieve as well as possible in reading. the child's future requires the ability to read well and comprehend thoroughly what has been read. Word attack skills must be taught to pupils as needed. These word attack skills include

1. phonics and syllabication.


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